



Minidoka NHS News

January 2016

Breaking News

Medal of Honor Recipient George "Joe" Sakata Passes

George Sakata passed away at his home in Denver, Colorado at the age of 95. The citation for his medal stated that he "distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on October 19, 1944, on hill 617 in the vicinity of Biffontaine, France. George was the Honorary Chairman of the Japanese American Veterans Association.

BIJAC Led Memorial Tours Reach International Audience

In the winter 2015 issue of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) newsletter, Lilly Kodama reported that the Memorial is increasingly reaching an international audience. Visits by teachers and principals from Spain and student leaders in journalism from Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Maldives have occurred in recent months. Students have also visited from Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Saudi Arabia.

Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) 2016 Student Essay, Poetry, and Video Contest

The contest is open to high school students (grades 9-12) and undergraduate and graduate college students. Cash prizes will be awarded to a total of sixteen winners: \$1,000 (each) to the top six winners. Last year GFBNEC received over 245 entries from 16 states and the District of Columbia representing 55 high schools and 20 universities. For further information contact Chris Brusatte at 310-222-5711 or via email at chris@goforbroke.org.

Happy 15th Birthday Minidoka National Historic Site

President Clinton signed Proclamation 7395 on January 17, 2001 establishing Minidoka Internment National Monument as "a unique and irreplaceable historical resource which protects historic structures and objects that provide opportunities for public education and interpretation of an important chapter in American history – the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II." Legislation in 2008 changed the name to Minidoka National Historic Site.

Minidoka Updates

Herrmann House Project

The project to rehabilitate the Herrmann House is progressing. The compliance work has been done and the project will move into contracting in the next few months. Construction work is slated to begin this fall with a completion date sometime in the spring of 2017.



Herrmann House

Phase II - Visitor Center Project

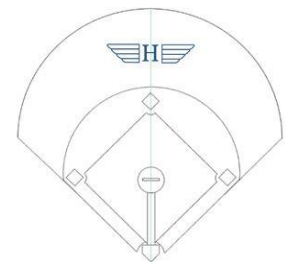
This phase of the project to rehabilitate a portion of Warehouse No. 5 as the park's visitor center will include creation of the final design and construction drawings. A contract for construction will be put in place this year.



Warehouse No. 5

Field-In-A-Day

The park has received approval from the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office to move forward with the construction of one of the baseball/softball fields at Minidoka. The Field-In-A-Day event will take place on Saturday, May 28, 2016. Friends of Minidoka is coordinating donations of money, materials, in-kind services, and volunteer help for this project.



Park Orientation Film

The park has received funding to create an orientation film for Minidoka NHS and the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial. Research for the project will begin this spring.



Bainbridge Island Memorial

Minidoka Irrigator Headlines January 1944

Each month this column will feature headlines from the *Minidoka Irrigator* during the same month in 1944.

January 1: **Expansion of Hunt Farm Program Seen for 1944**

A minimum of 1000 acres will be cleared and made ready for cropping in 1944.

January 8: **Evacuees Will Meet In Chicago**

Two representatives from each center are scheduled to attend a meeting with the WRA National Director to discuss the future of evacuees.

January 8: **Handicraft Exhibit Slated Next Week**

A handicraft exhibit will be held in Rec. 12 from 6:30-9:30 pm starting January 14 and continuing for two days.

January 15: **Hunt Has Hot Water As Boilermen Return**

Residents finally have hot water as Project Director Stafford and representatives of the boilermen reach a 5-point resolution to the strike.

January 15: **Second Sweetheart Contest Announced**

Sponsored jointly by Community Activities and the *Irrigator*, the sweetheart will be chosen by popular vote instead of by judges as last year.

January 22: **Pvt. Junie Kawamura, Only Nisei Paratrooper, Visits Parents Here**

Pvt. Kawamura was a 1941 graduate of Garfield High School and was attending the University of Washington prior to evacuation.

January 22: **Captain Describes Plight of Nisei in Imperial Japan**

Capt. Paul F. Rusch, briefly interned in Japan as an enemy alien after Pearl Harbor, stated that Nisei in Japan, treated as prisoners, must make weekly reports to the Japanese government.

January 29: **Hunt to Receive 87 Motor Vehicles**

Assistant project director, R.S. Davidson, announced that old 1935 to 1938 motor vehicles will be replaced with 1939 models.

Diamond Stories: Lifelong Friends

During our research about the role of baseball and softball in the lives of the Japanese incarcerated at Minidoka, Jordan Wong of the Wing Luke Museum sent a photo of the 1943 Block 42 team. Shortly after that, Brenda Creed contacted the Friends of Minidoka and indicated that she would like to donate her father's "42" baseball sweatshirt. A series of emails confirmed that her father was a member of the team pictured in the photo below that had been provided by the Wing Luke Museum.



Block 42 Baseball Team - 1943

Her father, Richard Izumi (tallest in 2nd row, 3rd from right) maintained a lifelong friendship with three of his teammates. Standing next to him is Yutaka Kanemoto (2nd row, 2nd from right) and Kizo Kubo (2nd row, right end). Standing in the first row, 3rd from the right was the fourth friend, Bill Matsumoto.

In addition to donating the sweatshirt, Brenda has shared information and many images of her father and his friends at camp and in the years after they left camp. Three generations of her family were incarcerated at Minidoka. Brenda, a Sansei, was born in the camp.



Four Friends in 1951: Richard Izumi, Bill Matsumoto, Yutaka Kanemoto, and Kiso Kubo

The sweatshirt, which arrived on January 13, is a tremendous addition to the Minidoka museum collection and is the first baseball artifact in the collection.

Special thanks to Jordan Wong and Brenda Creed for the sweatshirt, images, and the story of this friendship that continued long after the camp closed.



The seventy-three year-old shirt today



Block 42 Baseball Team eating in the Mess Hall

Honor Roll Photo Shows Right Panel

When the Honor Roll structure was reproduced in 2011, many names were missing on the right hand panel because the historic photographs did not show the names clearly. Over the past four years, we have asked you to help us complete that panel by supplying the names of people who should be on the Honor Roll. Just before the June Pilgrimage, we added 29 names using vinyl lettering.

Several months ago, Kelsea Holbrook sent us the photo on the right. Her grandmother, Fujiko Tamura Gardner, found it among camp photos in her late brother Mitsuru Tamura's belongings.

The photo shows most of the names on the right panel with the exception

of approximately 14 names whose last names start with "Y."

We hope to determine the missing names and reproduce the entire panel in time for the 2016 Pilgrimage. We still need your help. Please let us know of people whose names should be on the structure, especially those beginning with "Y."

We are also considering options for including names of people who served in the military but whose names were never on the panel because of entering the service after the panels were created, were not on the panels at the time the historic photos were taken, or for other reasons. We want to include everyone who served in the military from Minidoka.

Contact Carol Ash at 208-993-4125 or Carol_ash@nps.gov or Keith Yamaguchi at 206-390-1253 or k.yama1948@gmail.com to add names.



Tadako Tamura Mori and baby Freddy Mori in front of Honor Roll in summer 1945



This issue of the Minidoka NHS Newsletter begins the second year of monthly newsletters designed to update our partners and friends on recent events at the historic site and elsewhere.

A special thank you to everyone who suggested special features, wrote articles, shared information and images, and wrote encouraging emails. You have been the heart of this newsletter.

If you have information you would like to share or topics you would like to see discussed in the coming year, please email Carol Ash at carol_ash@nps.gov.

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Book Corner: *Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese Family*

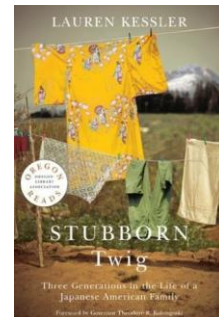
Lauren Kessler

This month's featured book, published in 1993, celebrates a man with an important legacy: Minoru Yasui.

Min was incarcerated at Minidoka September-November 1942, and from August 1943 until June 1944. He spent November 1942 through August 1943 in solitary confinement in Multnomah County Jail, awaiting the appeal on his curfew violation to take his case to the U.S. Supreme Court. *Yasui v. United States* was one of four cases challenging Japanese American wartime incarceration to reach the Supreme Court.

In *Stubborn Twig*, Kessler delivers an intimate portrait of three generations of Yasuis, from Issei parents, Masuo and Shidzuyo Yasui, to Min and his seven Nisei siblings, to their Sansei children, now spread far and wide across the nation, a long way from their family's beginnings in the fruit orchards of Hood River, Oregon.

Min was awarded a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom on November 24, 2015. President Obama honored Min's legacy as "a call to our



national conscience; a reminder of our enduring obligation to be 'the land of the free and the home of the brave.'"

The Minoru Yasui Centennial Celebration will be held in Hood River on his 100th birthday, October 19, 2016. The Centennial Tribute will also include a documentary film, theatrical piece, school curricula, and exhibit, all surrounding the legacy of Min Yasui.

The Centennial Celebration of Min Yasui also coincides with the Centennial Celebration of the National Park Service in recognition of the NPS's 100th birthday on August 25, 2016.

This book was reviewed by Mia Russell, SCA Intern at Minidoka.

Minidoka Profile: George Nakashima

In April 2014, the Department of the Interior designated four new National Landmarks. One of the new Landmarks is the George Nakashima Woodworker Complex in Buck County, Pennsylvania. Internationally-renowned furniture designer and woodworker George Nakashima is one of America's most famous wood furniture craftsmen.

Born in Spokane, Washington in 1905, he studied forestry and architecture at the University of Washington. While at UW, he received a one-year scholarship to study at the Ecole Americaine de Beaux-Arts in Paris. After briefly attending the Harvard Graduate School of Design, he later earned a master's degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He traveled to France, Japan, and India in search of experiences that would enhance his career and his life. While in Japan in 1939, he met his future wife, Marion Maekawa, a Japanese American working in Tokyo. They married in 1941 and settled in Seattle. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, George, Marion, and their new baby

daughter, Mira, were sent to Minidoka War Relocation Authority camp in Idaho.

Bill Vaughn, whose family owned a farm 11 miles east of Minidoka, recalled in an interview that George was one of six Minidoka incarcerateds that harvested his father's carrot seed crop in the fall of 1942.

The assistant project director assigned Nakashima the task of designing a model barrack room for a family of three. Minidoka Report No. 7 states, "By ingenious use of native materials and frugal use of critical materials, he achieved some privacy for the occupants....by



George Nakashima at Minidoka.
NARA Photo



Nakashima working on the model apartment
NARA Photo

utilizing hinged and telescoping furniture, built-ins, and dual-purpose construction, he provided storage room and saved space without sacrificing comfort."

While at Minidoka, experienced Issei carpenter, Gentaro Kenneth Hikogawa trained George in the use and care of Japanese hand tools that were important to Nakashima's later works.

The family left Minidoka in May 1943 under the sponsorship of Antonin Raymond and settled in Pennsylvania. The woodworking shop that he established in 1945 is still in operation and run by his daughter Mira. George passed away in 1990 and Marion in 2004.

Minidoka Records Digitized

Volunteers from the "Family Search" program based in Salt Lake City spent several days at the Jerome County Historical Society in Jerome Idaho, digitizing their records. Included in the project were several sets of Minidoka records. Many years ago, staff at the historical society reviewed all issues of the Minidoka Irrigator and created several sets of files based on entries in the Irrigator: Births, Deaths, Marriages, Japanese Military Service Personnel, and Military Records. These were placed in library-type card files. The cards were part of the digitization project. The historic site will receive a copy of the records once the project is completed.

The military records will be especially helpful in determining

additional names on the Honor Roll (see page 3). The "Family Search" program is part of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints genealogy program. Volunteers in the program travel throughout the country providing free digitization services for local organizations.



Kenalou and Robert Evers digitizing records at the Jerome County Historical Society.

This newsletter is published monthly for our friends and partners across America.

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The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial on Bainbridge Island is a unit of Minidoka NHS. It is managed by Klondike Gold Rush NHP.

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